



Department of Homeland Security Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 20 December 2005

Current
Nationwide
Threat Level is

ELEVATED
SIGNIFICANT RISK OF
TERRORIST ATTACKS

[For info click here](http://www.dhs.gov/)

<http://www.dhs.gov/>

Daily Highlights

- CNN reports at least 19 people were killed when a seaplane leaving Miami for the Bahamas crashed into the ocean shortly after takeoff, prompting a massive search and rescue operation involving the fire department, Coast Guard, and other emergency departments, and closing the Port of Miami. (See item [10](#))
- The Associated Press reports a Connecticut food importer pleaded guilty Thursday, December 15, to smuggling chicken feet from Thailand and selling them to specialty grocers around the country; imports from Thailand are banned because of concerns about the H5N1 bird flu virus. (See item [19](#))
- The Associated Press reports customs agents have intercepted more than 50 shipments of counterfeit Tamiflu, the antiviral drug being stockpiled in anticipation of a bird flu pandemic, marking the first such seizures in the U.S., authorities said Sunday, December 18. (See item [22](#))

DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report *Fast Jump*

Production Industries: [Energy](#); [Chemical Industry and Hazardous Materials](#); [Defense Industrial Base](#)

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Energy Sector

Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: Physical: ELEVATED, Cyber: ELEVATED

Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://www.esisac.com>]

December 19, Baltimore Sun — **Energy firms finalize merger.** Florida-based FPL Group Inc. announced plans on Monday, December 19, to buy Baltimore-based Constellation Energy Group for about \$11 billion, creating the nation's third largest energy company. The deal, if approved by state and federal regulators, will give the combined business a market capitalization of \$28 billion, combined annual revenue of \$27 billion, and total assets worth \$57 billion. The merged Fortune 100 company will be known as Constellation Energy and maintain dual headquarters in Baltimore and Juno Beach, FL. The new business will operate seven nuclear power stations. Constellation, the parent company of Baltimore Gas and Electric Co. employs about 9,700 people, with 2,589 of them in Baltimore City and 6,461 in Maryland as a whole. FPL employs about 10,000. Industry analysts have praised the prospect of a merger between the two companies, saying it would give Constellation the market power it needs to be a contender in an industry that has seen more than \$430 billion worth of consolidation deals announced worldwide during the past year. As the deal is structured, analysts and energy industry experts predict that Baltimore would emerge as the hub for an even bigger energy producing and trading powerhouse.

Source: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bal-constellation1219.1.147309.story?coll=bal-home-headlines&ctrack=1&cset=true>

2. *December 19, Associated Press* — **More than 180,000 still without power in the Carolinas.** More than 180,000 customers were still without power in the Carolinas on Monday, December 19, four days after an ice storm that claimed five more lives over the weekend in accidents related to people seeking other ways to keep warm. Four of the deaths were attributed to carbon monoxide poisoning from gas-powered generators operating in enclosed areas and another occurred after a house burned down when a man was keeping warm by his wood-burning stove. The storm last Thursday, December 15, coated tree limbs with ice and sent them crashing onto power lines, causing 700,000 outages at its peak along a wide swath of South Carolina's upstate and western and central North Carolina. In the hard-hit Greenville area, where 75,000 remained without power, Mayor Knox White said the initial response by the region's primary utility — Duke Power — was poor. "They weren't prepared," he said. Duke Power chief executive Ruth Shaw said the company hoped to have most of the power restored on Tuesday, December 20.

Source: <http://www.news-record.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20051219/NEWSREC0101/51219014/1001/NEWSREC0201>

3. *December 18, Government Accountability Office* — **GAO-06-83: Stand-Down of Los Alamos National Laboratory: Total Costs Uncertain; Almost All Mission-Critical Programs Were Affected but Have Recovered (Report).** On July 16, 2004, the director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) declared a suspension, or stand-down, of laboratory operations to address safety and security concerns. LANL is one of three laboratories that conduct nuclear weapons research for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) within the Department of Energy (DOE). In deciding to stand down operations, LANL's director consulted with senior officials from NNSA and the University of California, the management and operating contractor for the laboratory. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) was asked to assess (1) the extent to which LANL's and NNSA's estimates capture the total cost of the stand-down, (2) the effect of the stand-down on LANL's major research programs, and (3) whether there was a reasonable basis for NNSA's decisions regarding the reimbursement of stand-down costs to the University of California. GAO is

recommending that DOE take actions to improve its oversight of management and operating contractors by requiring that contractors (1) track the costs of future stand-downs on an actual cost basis and (2) achieve an overall rating of outstanding as a basis to be awarded extra years to their contract terms. In commenting on the draft report, DOE generally concurred with GAO's recommendations.

Highlights: <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d0683high.pdf>

Source: <http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-83>

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Chemical Industry and Hazardous Materials Sector

4. *December 18, Associated Press* — **Refinery fire closes roads, prompts business evacuations in Colorado.** A fire at the Suncor Energy Inc. refinery Saturday night, December 17, in Commerce City, CO, prompted officials to close part of Interstate 270 before the fire was contained. Suncor's fire response team put out the fire within 30 minutes, said Steve Douglas, Suncor general manager of marketing. One employee was taken to a hospital as a precaution to check for smoke inhalation, Suncor said. No other injuries were reported, and about 125 employees who were on site were all accounted for, he said. The fire occurred around 9 p.m. MST amid freezing temperatures in one of three units that processes crude at the refinery, Douglas said. The crude unit was being brought online after having been shut down for about two weeks for regular maintenance when the fire started, he said. Flames were estimated at around 30 feet high, and smoke was visible from I-270, which was closed from I-76 to York Street. TV stations reported that neighboring businesses were evacuated.

Source: http://www.9news.com/acm_news.aspx?OSGNAME=KUSA&IKOBJECTID=3eedfe69-0abe-421a-01dc-79c8d261889b&TEMPLATEID=0c76dce6-ac1f-02d8-0047-c589c01ca7bf

5. *December 17, Associated Press* — **Thousands of gallons of oil spill from New Jersey refinery.** Officials rushed to clean up about 84,000 gallons of heating fuel and water along the shore of the Rahway River in Linden, NJ, after a pipe at an oil refinery burst. The spill happened Friday morning, December 16, when a pipe in an oil tank field burst, authorities said. A worker noticed red oil flowing from the pipe around 8 a.m. EST off a road near the Linden landfill. The oil then got into nearby landfills and the river. Authorities said Conoco Phillips Bayway Refinery, which owns the tank, immediately shut off the pipe. Department of Environmental Protection commissioner Bradley Campbell said the spill posed no threat to humans, adding that with the cold water temperature, few birds in the surrounding wetlands would be affected.

Source: <http://www.nj.com/newsflash/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-18/1134841446166060.xml&storylist=jersey>

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Defense Industrial Base Sector

Nothing to report.

Banking and Finance Sector

6. *December 19, Washington Post* — Database hack exposes police financial data.

Reevesnamepins.com, a company that manufactures the plastic and metal name tags that police officers around the country wear on their uniforms, had its customer database hacked recently, exposing credit card and other personal data for a number of police departments. The discovery was made by investigators at CardCops.com, which monitors online sites and forums for evidence of stolen credit and consumer data. CEO Dan Clements said his company spotted the stolen credit card information while trolling an Internet relay chat (IRC) room dedicated to credit card fraud. Among information posted into the forum was corporate and personal accounts registered to officers and police departments nationwide, including the New York City Police Dept., the Alamosa, CO, Sheriff's Department, and the Idaho State Police, Clements said.

Source: http://blogs.washingtonpost.com/securityfix/2005/12/cop_name_tag_com.html

7. *December 16, EWeek* — Hackers, extortion threats shut down game site. White Wolf Publishing Inc., a company responsible for some of the most popular role-playing game brands, has shut down operations after international hackers exploited a software flaw and stole user data that included user names, e-mail addresses, and encrypted passwords. Following the breach, the company, based in Stone Mountain, GA, said the hackers attempted to extort money by threatening to post the potentially sensitive user data on the Internet. "As far as we can ascertain, they were unable to access any credit card data (nor have they claimed they did). However, it is possible for the encrypted passwords they accessed to be decrypted given enough time," the company said. Although Website breaches and data theft are commonplace, security researchers say the brazen extortion attempt against White Wolf confirms earlier fears that attacks against small businesses sites are being done by well-organized international crime groups. "This started early in 2004 when the botnet owners used mostly denial-of-service attacks to extort money from banks and ISPs. We used to think of those as experimental attacks, but it's become much more brazen and organized today," said John Pescatore, research director for Internet Security at Gartner Inc.

Source: <http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,1759,1903020,00.asp>

Transportation and Border Security Sector

8. *December 19, New York Post* — Toy bomb causes evacuation of John F. Kennedy Airport terminal. A passenger touched off a bomb scare at John F. Kennedy International Airport around 9 p.m. EST on Sunday evening, December 18, when he was found carrying a toy hand grenade in his carry-on bag. The Port Authority police evacuated the JetBlue terminal for about 45 minutes. Transportation Security Administration officers noticed what appeared to be a grenade while scanning the man's bag and called police. The New York Police Department bomb squad determined that the grenade was not an explosive.

Source: <http://www.nypost.com/news/regionalnews/59867.htm>

9. *December 19, Associated Press* — **New York City transit talks try to avoid wider strike.**

Drivers on two private bus lines walked off the job Monday, December 19, inconveniencing thousands of commuters, and talks resumed in an attempt to avert a citywide walkout that threatened to strand millions more. After making little progress over the weekend, negotiators for the Transport Workers Union (TWU) and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) returned to the bargaining table Monday morning, but the head of the union warned that plans were firm for a full-fledged strike Tuesday, December 20. "Unless there is substantial movement by the authority, trains and buses will come to a halt as of midnight tonight," TWU chief Roger Toussaint said. The walkout that began early Monday affected two bus lines in Queens that serve some 50,000 commuters. The city's buses and subways — the nation's largest transit system — serve up to seven million riders per day. The strike at Jamaica Buses Inc. and Triboro Coach Corp. began at 12:01 a.m. EST. More than 100 workers from the two companies picketed Monday morning, amidst plans for more talks that day. Officials announced contingency measures, in the event of a citywide strike Tuesday.

Source: http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/N/NYC_TRANSIT_TALKS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

10. *December 19, CNN* — **Seaplane crashes off Miami Beach.** Nineteen bodies were recovered after a seaplane crashed Monday, December 19, off Miami Beach, said Coast Guard Capt. James Mays. Twenty people were aboard the plane, he said. "We are still diving on the wreckage," he added. The Grumman G-73 airplane crashed upon takeoff from Miami for the island of Bimini in the Bahamas. The crash, which happened around 2:30 p.m. EST, prompted a massive search and rescue operation involving the fire department, Coast Guard, and other emergency departments. Three Coast Guard search vessels, aided by private boats, searched the waters. The plane, operated by Chalks Ocean Airways, was carrying 20 people: two pilots and 18 passengers, including three infants. The Port of Miami was shut down immediately after the crash, and some cruise liners were diverted from the area so they would not interfere with the rescue operation, Coast Guard Petty Officer Dana Warr said. The National Transportation Safety Board announced that senior air safety investigator William English will lead a 14-member team to Miami to begin looking into the crash. A spokesperson for the FBI's Miami office said two agents have been sent to the site, but there was no evidence of foul play.

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/12/19/miami.crash/index.html>

11. *December 18, Associated Press* — **U.S. airlines buffeted by fuel costs but hopeful of recovery.** Eight airlines are flying in bankruptcy and jet fuel prices are still wrecking budgets after spiking to all-time highs this fall. This year (2005) marks a fifth straight year of multibillion-dollar losses. Yet there's reason for cautious hope that the worst may be over in the volatile U.S. airline business. If oil prices continue their recent trend downward and no catastrophes occur, the industry could return to profitability in 2006. More than \$30 billion in losses since the 2001 terror attacks has caused airlines to cut more labor costs, eliminate more unprofitable routes, and reduce more capacity this year. The restructuring has reshaped virtually every airline company, not just those operating under federal bankruptcy protection. It also helped produce fuller planes and much-improved operating results. Two new factors weigh on the chances of returning to profitability: the airlines' ability to hedge fuel prices, and high interest costs on debts associated with the airlines' restructuring. Industry observers will be looking closely at two post-bankruptcy airlines — United and US Airways — that could set

the tone for U.S. carriers next year.

Source: http://www.sanluisobispo.com/mld/sanluisobispo/business/1343_7252.htm

- 12. *December 18, Associated Press* — Nigeria aircraft check strands thousands.** Nigeria grounded Boeing 737 planes across the country for safety checks, stranding thousands of travelers Sunday, December 18, after two deadly accidents in two months. All Boeing 737–100 and 200 series will be checked for stress cracks, in compliance with a U.S. air–worthiness directive, said Folasade Odutola, head of the aviation panel overseeing the checks. The ruling by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) required all such models of aircraft to be inspected within 90 days of its August 2000 ruling. Many countries follow FAA directives. The Nigerian official did not explain why the measure was only being implemented now. Thousands of passengers in Lagos, Nigeria's largest city and Abuja, the capital, waited in departure lounges. President Olusegun Obasanjo had promised to overhaul Nigeria's airline industry after two major plane crashes in seven weeks killed 224 people, blaming some of the industry's problems on corruption. The causes of the crashes have not been determined.
- Source: http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/1105AP_Nigeria_Airplanes_Grounded.html

- 13. *December 17, Knight Ridder* — Random security checks back for holidays.** Random airport security checks return Thursday, December 22, as the Christmas travel rush takes off. It's also the day security screeners loosen restrictions on what passengers can bring on a plane. Passengers will no longer need to forfeit nail scissors and other small tools — as long as they're not too big or deemed particularly dangerous. Yet travelers may be subject to a secondary screening, including an inspection of shoes for explosives, additional "wandering," a pat–down search, and manual bag inspection. Random secondary screenings were dropped in 2003 because they were deemed too much of a hassle. Freed from having to confiscate small scissors and other unlikely weapons, screeners can concentrate on finding more dangerous items — and people. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) official Carrie Harmon said of the increased screenings to start this week: "We are looking at risks and vulnerability and applying our resources to where we think the threats are the greatest." The TSA won't disclose how frequently it will conduct random searches. Starting Thursday, passengers will be allowed through security checkpoints with scissors with blades less than four inches long and screwdrivers and other tools that are no more than seven inches long.
- Source: http://www.siliconvalley.com/mld/mercurynews/business/13429980.htm?source=rss&channel=mercurynews_business

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Postal and Shipping Sector

- 14. *December 17, NBC4 (OH)* — Police find 70 pounds of pot at shipping stores.** Monday, December 19, marks the busiest mailing day for the holiday season as about 280 million card and letters will be mailed. But it's not just gifts being sent out, many packages are confiscated by police for drugs, NBC 4's Karin Hirschey reported. Police said several suspicious packages were found at a FedEx and a UPS store. According to search warrants, more than 70 pounds of marijuana was discovered in four boxes. In each case, the packages were sent from a legitimate shipping store in Arizona, police said. Workers became suspicious of the packages because there was either no contact information or the information was fake, which police said is how

criminals try to hide their identities, Hirschey reported.

Source: <http://www.nbc4i.com/news/5575470/detail.html>

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Agriculture Sector

15. *December 19, Agricultural Research Service* — New antibiotic approved for treating

bacterial honeybee disease. American beekeepers will soon have a new antibiotic with which to protect their colonies from American foulbrood disease, thanks to Agricultural Research Service (ARS) studies. TYLAN Soluble (tylosin tartrate) was approved for use October 20 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, following the agency's review of research data compiled by scientists with the ARS Bee Research Laboratory in Beltsville, MD. American foulbrood is among the most widespread and devastating diseases of honeybees. Caused by the bacterium *Paenibacillus larvae*, the disease kills young bee larvae and transforms their remains into dark, shriveled ropes or "scales." These contain billions of spores that are easily spread by nurse bees. Although American foulbrood poses no human danger, severe outbreaks can weaken or kill entire bee colonies, according to Mark Feldlaufer, who leads the ARS Beltsville bee lab. Before tylosin tartrate, only one other antibiotic, oxytetracycline hydrochloride (Terramycin), was available for use against American foulbrood. However, reliance on this one compound has prompted the emergence of resistant strains of American foulbrood. By one estimate, honeybee pollination of apples, almonds, blueberries, and many other agricultural crops results in yield and quality improvements valued at more than \$14 billion annually.

Source: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/News/docs.htm?docid=1261>

16. *December 19, USAgNet* — World Trade Organization reaches agreement on cuts in

agriculture. The 149 members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) approved a proposal aimed at steering global trade negotiations toward a deal on cutting tariffs and agriculture subsidies by the end of next year. The agreement outlines plans for the U.S. and European Union to scale back their farm subsidies and open their markets to more products from the world's poorest nations in a bid to prevent a collapse in global trade talks. The deal is a first step as negotiators try to reach a new WTO deal next year. After six days of WTO discussions in Hong Kong, the EU said it would scrap export payments for farm goods by 2013, and the U.S. agreed to expedite deep cuts in payments to cotton growers.

Source: <http://www.usagnet.com/story-national.cfm?Id=1260&yr=2005>

17. *December 19, Western Farm Press* — Lime sulfur seen as aid for black measles of grapes.

Lime sulfur sprays can manage the trio of pathogens that cause black measles, also known as young vine decline, in California vineyards, says Doug Gubler, a University of California plant pathologist. According to Gubler, the combination of fungi, which also goes by the names esca, Spanish measles, and Petri disease, is throughout the state. Pending results of continuing trials during the winter, Gubler said his studies indicate that treatments of lime sulfur at 10 to 15 gallons per acre will kill the spores of the disease complex. Black measles infections can lead to a 50 percent loss of new shoots and also support entry into vines by other destructive, wood rot fungi. Plant pathologists have known for decades of the several fungi involved, although they could not introduce infections and cause symptoms and therefore discounted them as pathogens. Only in the last several years has Gubler learned more about the pathogens' biology.

At a recent plant disease seminar, he identified the three major pathogens in California as *Phaeomoniella chlamydospora*, *Phaeoacremonium inflatipes*, and *Phaeoacremonium aleophilum*. The first and second pathogens release spores from February to June, and the third from February to late July.

Source: <http://westernfarmpress.com/news/12-19-05-lime-sulfur-for-black-measles/>

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Food Sector

18. *December 19, Financial Times* — **South Korea to start talks on ending U.S. beef ban.** South Korea will on Tuesday, December 20, begin talks with visiting U.S. officials on resuming beef imports, paving the way for the opening of what was the U.S.'s third largest beef export market until a mad cow disease scare two years ago. Washington has been lobbying hard for an end to the ban, which shut a market worth \$600 million a year. Pressure on Seoul to relax the restrictions intensified last week after Japan decided to restart U.S. beef imports. The South Korean agriculture ministry said Monday, December 19, officials from the two countries would on Tuesday, December 20, start talks on the safety of U.S. beef, with a view to beginning substantive talks on opening the market. However, it is likely to take several months before imports begin again. South Korean officials have been debating whether U.S. beef can now be considered safe, but any relaxation is likely to limit imports to beef from cows aged less than 30 months, less strict than the 21-month limit imposed by Japan last week.

Source: <http://news.ft.com/cms/s/5aeedc9e-7076-11da-89d3-0000779e2340.html>

19. *December 15, Associated Press* — **Connecticut importer admits smuggling chicken feet.** A Connecticut food importer and its owner pleaded guilty Thursday, December 15, to smuggling chicken feet from Thailand and selling them to specialty grocers around the country. Chicken feet are an Asian delicacy but imports from Thailand are banned because of concerns about the H5N1 bird flu virus, which has killed at least 69 people in Asia since 2003. Health inspectors in Ohio searched several grocers in March and discovered chicken feet in stock. Investigators traced them back to a West Haven, CT, company, Food King Inc. Between 2001 and 2005, prosecutors said, the company imported more than 920 cases -- or 27,600 pounds -- of chicken feet and sold them to stores in at least 11 states. There were no reports of health problems in connection to the imports, and health officials said the company cooperated with a voluntary recall. Besides Connecticut, the product was shipped to Ohio, Georgia, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. Because the item was banned, Food King sold it, for cash, in packages labeled as jellyfish.

Source: http://www.boston.com/news/local/rhode_island/articles/2005/12/15/connecticut_importer_admits_smuggling_chicken_feet/

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Water Sector

20. *December 19, Associated Press* — **Twenty-six Nebraska towns have high levels of uranium in water.** As many as 26 cities, towns, and villages in the state have drinking water with high

levels of uranium, according to Nebraska Health and Human Services (NHHS). "It's been a stealth problem, and it's hitting small communities hard," said Anne Pamperl, NHHS radionuclides rule manager. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standard for uranium is 30 parts per billion, based on consuming two liters of contaminated water each day. Higher levels increase the risk of kidney failure and cancer. It's considered safe to drink contaminated water for one to two years as long as test readings are 60 parts per billion or lower, said NHHS health risk assessor Sue Dempsey. If a reading is higher than 60, people should drink treated or bottled water, she said. Deposits from glaciers and volcanic ash make uranium a naturally occurring mineral statewide. Its highest concentrations are found in current or past river valleys where water carried the mineral, Pamperl said. The state last year identified 43 municipalities that were likely to have uranium issues, and tests revealed that 26 of those cities and towns had elevated levels. Thirteen municipalities repeatedly tested high for uranium and have been ordered to find new water sources or develop a treatment plan.

Source: <http://www.siouxcityjournal.com/articles/2005/12/19/news/nebraska/f560773157674c46862570dc0017e607.txt>

21. *December 15, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency* — **New drinking water rules announced.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized two related drinking water protection rules Thursday, December 15. The "Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule" (LT2), increases monitoring and treatment requirements for water systems that are prone to outbreaks of *Cryptosporidium*, a waterborne pathogen. The rule requires that public water systems that are supplied by surface water sources monitor for *Cryptosporidium*. Those water systems that measure higher levels of *Cryptosporidium* or do not filter their water must provide additional protection by using options from a "microbial toolbox" of treatment and management processes. The rule requires open reservoirs to either be covered or receive added treatment. The "Stage 2 Disinfection Byproducts Rule" (Stage 2 DBP) targets water systems that have the greatest risk of high DBPs by using more stringent methods for determining compliance. Under the rule, water systems are required to find monitoring sites where higher levels of DBPs are likely to occur and use these new locations for compliance monitoring. If DBPs are found to exceed drinking water standards at any of these new monitoring locations, water systems must begin to take corrective action.

Source: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/27166bca9a9490ee852570180055e350/7b40d09f9a90e02f852570d80066e978!OpenDocument>

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Public Health Sector

22. *December 19, Associated Press* — **Customs agents seize counterfeit flu drug.** Customs agents have intercepted more than 50 shipments of counterfeit Tamiflu, the antiviral drug being stockpiled in anticipation of a bird flu pandemic, marking the first such seizures in the U.S., authorities said Sunday, December 18. The first package was intercepted November 26 at an airmail facility near the San Francisco International Airport, said Roxanne Hercules, a spokesperson for U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Agents have since seized 51 packages, each containing as many as 50 counterfeit capsules labeled generic Tamiflu. The fake drugs had none of Tamiflu's active ingredients, and officials were testing the contents of the capsules. Initial tests indicated some vitamin C in the capsules, said David Elder, director of the U.S.

Food and Drug Administration Office of Enforcement. Information on the packages was written in Chinese, but it is unclear where the drugs originated, he said. They were sent by Asian suppliers to customers who placed orders over the Internet, Hercules said. She said none of the shipments intercepted was bound for doctors or hospitals.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/18/AR2005121801458.html>

23. *December 19, Reuters* — **House approves \$3.8 billion for avian flu.** The U.S. House of Representatives on Monday, December 19, approved \$3.78 billion to begin preparing for a possible avian flu epidemic, including stockpiling potential vaccines, training emergency officials, and increasing international surveillance. The avian flu funding was attached to an unrelated defense-spending bill passed by the House by a vote of 308–106 that faces an uncertain future in the Senate later this week.

Source: http://today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2005-12-19T104832Z_01_ARM912200_RTRUKOC_0_US-BIRDFLU-FUNDING-CONGRESS.xml&archived=False

24. *December 19, Jakarta Post (Indonesia)* — **Indonesia says eight-year-old boy died of bird flu.** Local tests show that an eight-year-old boy in Indonesia has died of bird flu, Health Ministry officials said Monday, December 19, as they awaited confirmation from the World Health Organization. It was not immediately clear if the boy, who died last week in a dense residential area of the capital Jakarta, had contact with sick birds, said Hariadi Wibisono who heads a department charged with eradicating animal-borne diseases. The H5N1 bird flu virus has been ravaging poultry stocks across Asia since 2003 and has jumped to humans, killing at least 71, most in Vietnam and Thailand. Results for the boy and a 39-year-old man who also died last week are expected in the next few days.

Source: http://www.thejakartapost.com/detaillatestnews.asp?fileid=20_051219124413&iREC=6

25. *December 19, Bloomberg* — **New U.S. rules will aim to block spread of drug-resistant germs.** U.S. health officials are preparing new hospital infection control guidelines to slow the growing spread of bacteria that has become resistant to antibiotics. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will release the new hospital rules within three months. Michelle Pearson, chief of the National Center for Infectious Disease's prevention and evaluation branch, said Sunday, December 18. The new rules will intensify sterilization requirements for health workers, increase testing of patients who may harbor dangerous germs, and may call for hospitals to create special quarantine wards. Researchers are concerned especially about antibiotic resistant bacterial infections — such as methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) — that arise in hospitals and spread to homes and crowded workplaces. Bacteria mutate constantly, sometimes in ways that allow them to overcome widely used antibiotics such as penicillin and methicillin. About two million patients become infected inside U.S. hospitals each year, according to the Infectious Diseases Society of America. Staphylococcus aureus alone accounts for about 300,000 of those infections. About 40 percent of those germs can overcome methicillin, and about 12,000 infected patients die. Increasingly, researchers are finding these drug-resistant infections outside the hospital, leading to concerns about widespread outbreaks.

MRSA information: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub_mrsa.htm

The Rise of Antibiotic-Resistant Infections: http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/795_antibio.html

Source: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000103&sid=aQGnyaFWj2FA&refer=us>

26. *December 19, Associated Press* — **Vietnam holds second bird flu drill.** Sunday, December 18, the sense of urgency was real enough though the danger was not, as Vietnam conducted its second large-scale bird flu drill to test the country's readiness to battle a possible pandemic. The country's first major drill was in Hanoi last month. About 500 people participated in Sunday's exercise on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City at a high school in the city's Cu Chi district. Under the mock scenario, dozens of people fell sick and local officials were forced to act quickly to contain possible infections. During the elaborate exercise, the factory was informed that a factory worker had become sick with suspected bird flu after visiting her village. Investigations turned up another 60 people who had direct contact with her and 20 of them showed signs of illness. The grounds of the sprawling high school, turned into a field hospital, became the center of action with temporary cots set up for about a dozen patients. The local people's committee of Cu Chi held urgent meetings and decided to go door to door in the province to inform residents. Public speakers, radio announcements and TV spots were used to keep the public informed and hold off panic.

Source: <http://www.thanhniennews.com/healthy/?catid=8&newsid=11359>

27. *December 18, Business Journal of the Greater Triad Area (NC)* — **Emergency rooms changing to handle more mental patients.** More Triad hospitals are cordoning off parts of their emergency departments to deal with a growing number of psychiatric patients. North Carolina has tried to reform mental health care in the last few years, but those efforts haven't worked out as planned, hospital officials say. The result: more patients in need of psychiatric treatment arriving in ERs often ill-suited to best address their immediate needs. Forsyth Medical Center, for instance, has seen a nine percent increase, to 4,088, in the number of psychiatric patients coming into the emergency department in the first 10 months of 2005, compared to the same period last year. At Wake Forest Baptist, the number of psychiatric emergency room patients has grown 25 percent since 2001, when the state began to change the mental health system. Moses Cone Health System has also seen increases, with the Greensboro hospitals now handling 600 to 700 mental health screenings each month. For emergency departments, which are designed to handle primarily medical emergencies and traumatic injuries, psychiatric patients pose special challenges. Hospital officials say psychiatric patients need specially trained nurses and other health care providers, and often require secure, private, safe rooms that conventional emergency rooms may not have.

Source: <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/10527721/>

28. *December 16, Associated Press* — **West Nile virus cases are on rise.** West Nile virus cases in the U.S. rose more than 16 percent this year, with a marked increase along the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast, the government reported Thursday, December 15. The number of human cases in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas increased by about 24 percent from 2004, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said. The number of West Nile cases that resulted in serious neurological diseases such as encephalitis and meningitis along the Gulf Coast rose only 17 percent. Most infected people never get sick, but about 20 percent suffer symptoms resembling the flu. Fewer than one percent become severely ill. A total of 2,744 cases in humans were reported from January 1 to December 1, 2005, up from 2,359 reported in the same period of 2004, according to the CDC. So far this year, 1,365

people have been hospitalized with meningitis, encephalitis, fever, or other illnesses caused by West Nile. There have been 98 deaths. For the same period last year, 1,027 were hospitalized and 83 died. In the four Gulf Coast states, the total number of cases went from 287 in the first 11 months of 2004 to 376 during the same period in 2005.

West Nile Virus Activity: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/surv&control05Maps.htm>

Source: http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2005/12/16/west_nile_cases_are_on_rise_especially_along_gulf_coast/

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Government Sector

Nothing to report.

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Emergency Services Sector

29. *December 18, Associated Press* — Apartment explosion highlights New Jersey rescue team's skills. When buildings come tumbling down, an elite, New Jersey search and rescue team swings into action. "Task Force One," consisting of nearly 230 firefighters, paramedics, structural engineers and other disaster specialists, is often the best hope of anyone trapped in the wreckage. Specially trained in building collapses and based at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station, NJ, the mostly volunteer unit is called to incidents in which buildings have collapsed or are in imminent danger of doing so. The first priority is sizing up the situation as quickly as possible to determine if rescuers are in danger from a further collapse. Task Force One has several high-tech gadgets that can help locate and communicate with people trapped in the rubble, including a fiber-optic camera on a flexible stick that can be maneuvered and manipulated into gaps or pockets of rubble. Another tool is a two-way communication device mounted at the end of a boom, or a long pole, that can be lowered into holes or pits, enabling rescuers to call out to people trapped, and then listen for any responses.

Source: http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/newjersey/story/5775_245p-5792957c.html

30. *December 18, Portland Press Herald (ME)* — If disaster hits, Maine lacks way to communicate. Four years after the September 11 terrorist attacks exposed major weaknesses in emergency radio communications, Maine still lags when it comes to public safety agencies being able to communicate with each other in a disaster. In a natural or man-made catastrophe, radio communications among local, state and national emergency personnel would be fragmented and cumbersome in many areas outside of Portland. That could lead to delayed response, inadequate information sharing and confused lines of authority — ultimately putting people's lives in danger. The problem has become the main focus of the Legislature's Task Force to Study Maine's Homeland Security Needs. After several hearings, the Task Force has determined communications is among the most important topics to address and has set aside a separate hearing January 13 in Bangor to focus on it. In addition, state agencies are planning to invest \$50 million over four years for a massive upgrade of the state emergency communications system. The system will include new base stations, new radios and new and

refurbished radio towers, all linking agencies of state government from the state police to the Maine Department of Transportation and the Emergency Management Agency.

Source: <http://pressherald.maintoday.com/news/state/051218statetalk.ing.shtml>

31. *December 18, Federal Computer Weekly* — **Senate committee passes tsunami bill.** Reacting to the devastation caused by natural disasters in 2005, a Senate committee has approved a bill that would allocate \$35 million a year to repair tsunami detection technology along the Pacific coast and create a national tsunami warning system. The Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee referred the bill to the full Senate last week. According to a committee report accompanying the bill, the overall quality of the Pacific's tsunami detection buoys has decreased 50 percent in the past 15 months. The legislation, called the Warning, Alert and Response Network Act (WARN), would fund the formation of a nationwide tsunami warning system by \$35 million a year from fiscal 2006 through fiscal 2012, including \$5 million annually for projects to improve the resilience of all U.S. coastal communities. Currently, there are no tsunami detection buoys floating in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico or Caribbean Sea, where tension between the Atlantic and Caribbean plates creates another potential disaster zone. Under the proposed legislation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration would manage the national tsunami warning and mitigation program. The Senate bill calls for the modernization of the U.S. tsunami warning system by the end of 2007. Source: <http://www.fcw.com/article91758-12-18-05-Web>

32. *December 17, Anchorage Daily News (AK)* — **Disaster plan for city gets unveiled.** Anchorage, AK, unveiled its new emergency operations plan Friday, December 16. The document has been revised to incorporate some lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina. Aged and infirm residents who live alone, for example, will become a high priority. And under the new plan, people with dogs, cats and other domestic animals could bring their pets with them to shelters, although the animals would be housed in separate temporary quarters, officials said. If Anchorage found itself facing a widespread disaster and residents had to leave their homes, the plan calls for them to evacuate with their animals, said Kattaryna L. Stiles, a manager in the Municipality's Office of Emergency Management. Pets brought along by their owners will not be kept in the schools and other facilities used as shelters for their evacuee owners. Instead, Stiles said, the animals would be kept in some other facility as close to the evacuee shelters as possible. The city hopes to register their 4,400 frail, mentally ill, and vulnerable residents twice a year, keeping a database so those responding to an emergency would know whom to look for. Registration is scheduled to begin in the spring, according to Stiles. Source: <http://www.adn.com/news/alaska/story/7293697p-7205378c.html>

33. *December 16, Jersey City Reporter (NJ)* — **New Jersey county acquires the state's first Ballistic Engineered Armored Response Vehicle.** The Hudson County, NJ, Sheriff's Department debuted a new 16,000-pound armored vehicle last month, complete with seven gun ports and a host of other features designed for police and rescue work. Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise and Hudson County Sheriff Joe Cassidy announced the acquisition of what is called a Ballistic Engineered Armored Response Vehicle (BEAR). County spokesperson Jim Kennelly said, "It is over 15 tons of high-tech ballistic steel that offers wrap-around explosive and projectile protection. Our vehicle is capable of withstanding just about anything up to a low-yield nuclear weapon." This vehicle is one of the most popular new weapons in urban police and rescue, and has become an industry standard for first responder

and military units. The vehicle is the first of its kind in New Jersey, and is also currently in use by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department as well as the United States Air Force. The vehicle is sizeable enough to carry 12—fully equipped Special Weapons And Tactics officers inside and can be used in any number of situations such as an armed confrontation, a barricaded suspect, or hostage crisis.

Source: http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=15771953&BRD=1291&PAG=461&dept_id=523586&rft=6

- 34. *December 15, Department of Homeland Security* — DHS urges Americans to make emergency preparedness their New Year's resolution.** On Thursday, December 15, as part of its Ready campaign, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) encouraged Americans to make at least one New Year's resolution that is both important and easy to keep: preparing for emergencies. "As 2006 approaches, we continue to look for innovative ways to empower families and businesses to prepare for emergencies," said DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff. "In this time when Americans are making resolutions to better their lives, the message of preparedness is truly fitting. Making an emergency plan for their home or business is just one of the simple steps individuals can take to help ensure that they are as prepared as possible if an emergency occurs." In a recent national survey, only 58 percent of Americans have made an emergency supply kit, developed a family emergency plan or learned more about potential threats, the three steps recommended by the Ready campaign. Materials, including family communication plan templates and sample business continuity plans, are available on the Ready.gov Website providing Americans with the resources needed to make New Year's resolutions.

Ready campaign Website: <http://www.ready.gov/>

Source: <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=5098>

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Information Technology and Telecommunications Sector

- 35. *December 19, Associated Press* — House moves for all-digital TV by 2009.** House lawmakers approved legislation early Monday, December 19, that would complete the transition to all-digital television broadcasts by February 17, 2009. The measure also would allocate up to \$1.5 billion to help consumers with older, analog TV sets purchase converter boxes so they would continue to get service in the digital era. The date for all-digital and the subsidy were included in a broader deficit-cutting bill that the Senate could take up later Monday. The Senate had also proposed a much bigger converter box subsidy of \$3 billion. The compromise figure of \$1.5 billion is meant to help the 21 million households who rely on free, over-the-air television. Cable and satellite customers would not be affected by the switch to digital. The move to all-digital will free valuable radio spectrum, some of which will be allocated to improve radio communications among fire and police departments and other first responders. The rest of the spectrum will be auctioned by the government for an estimated \$10 billion, though private estimates put that number higher. The House bill also would set aside up to \$1 billion for public safety agencies to upgrade their communications systems.

Source: http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051219/ap_on_hi_te/congress_digital_tv;_ylt=AjK_5YeG5WoxDRa_l0leG4jtBAF;_ylu=X3oDMTA5aHJvMDdwBHNIYwN5bmNhdA--

36. *December 16, CNET News* — **Microsoft patch jams up IE.** The "critical" security fix for Internet Explorer (IE) available last Tuesday, December 13, is causing trouble for users who have been testing the new IE 7 browser. Microsoft has received "scattered reports of users experiencing odd browser behavior" after installing the latest security update, Jeremy Dallman, project manager for IE security at the company, wrote in a Friday, December 16, posting to a corporate blog. Three different problems have been reported: The browser could crash right after starting up; links may come up blank; or multiple windows may open when the browser is initiated, according to the posting. "After investigating several of these reports, we have traced these issues to a common source," Dallman wrote. The culprit is IE 7, the next version of Microsoft's Web browser, which is in beta testing. The problems occur only if IE 7 is installed on a machine alongside IE 6. That double-IE configuration is not supported by the fix, according to Dallman's note. When installed next to IE 6, the first beta of IE 7 will add an incorrectly configured key to the Windows Registry the first time it is run, he wrote. This can be resolved by deleting the key from the Windows Registry.
Source: http://news.com.com/Microsoft+patch+jams+up+IE/2100-1002_3-5 999193.html
37. *December 16, CNET News* — **Dasher worm gallops onto the Internet.** A Windows-targeted worm that drops spying software on vulnerable PCs is spreading across the Internet, security experts have warned. The Dasher.B worm exploits a flaw in Microsoft Windows Distributed Transaction Coordinator, or MDTC, security companies said Friday, December 16. Microsoft announced and patched the hole in the component for transaction processing in October. However, initial glitches with the update may have left some users without a properly implemented fix, Sophos said. Dasher.B is a network worm that has the potential to open a back door on computers with the MSDTC flaw, security experts said. The infected systems are then prompted to connect to a remote computer for instructions. Once connected, it downloads a malicious program that tracks keystrokes. A third version of the worm emerged Friday, Dasher.C, which almost looks identical to Dasher.B, said Oliver Friedrichs, senior manager at Symantec's Security Response Center. Three versions of Dasher — B, C and A, which emerged earlier this week — have infected at least 3,000 systems worldwide, Friedrichs said, noting the growth rate of the infection has since leveled off.
Source: http://news.com.com/Dasher+worm+gallops+onto+the+Net/2100-1002_3-5999114.html?part=rss&tag=5999114&subj=news
38. *December 15, ZDNET News* — **Senate panel approves more Internet-policing powers.** The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) would gain expanded policing powers and could share information about spammers and other miscreants with foreign governments under a bill approved Thursday, December 15, by a U.S. Senate panel. Called the Undertaking Spam, Spyware, and Fraud Enforcement with Enforcers Beyond Borders Act of 2005, the proposal is nearly identical to legislation pushed by the FTC itself two years ago that drew concerns from civil liberties groups and was never enacted. In essence, the bill would expand existing FTC powers so that the agency could go after any "unfair or deceptive practices" that are likely to cause "foreseeable injury" on U.S. soil or involve conduct in the United States. Intended by its sponsors to help combat such menaces as spam, spyware and telemarketing fraud carried out on international turf, the bill would allow the FTC to collaborate with foreign law enforcement agencies and swap information on a reciprocal basis.
Further detail on this Act can be found at:

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d109:s.01608:>

Source: http://news.zdnet.com/2100-9588_22-5996703.html

39. *December 15, Register (United Kingdom)* — **Geeks, squatters and saboteurs threaten corporate security.** Workers across Europe are continuing to place their own companies at risk from information security attacks. This "threat from within" is undermining the investments organizations make to defend against security threats, according to a study by security firm McAfee. The survey, conducted by ICM Research, produced evidence of both ignorance and negligence over the use of company IT resources. One in five workers let family and friends use company laptops and PCs to access the Internet. More than half connect their own devices or gadgets to their work PC and a quarter of these do so every day. Around 60 percent admit to storing personal content on their work PC. One in ten confessed to downloading content at work they shouldn't. Most errant workers put their firms at risk through either complacency or ignorance, but a small minority are believed to be actively seeking to damage the company from within. Five percent of those questioned say they have accessed areas of their IT system they shouldn't have while a very small number admitted to stealing information from company servers.

Source: http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/12/15/mcafee_internal_security_survey/

Internet Alert Dashboard

DHS/US-CERT Watch Synopsis

Over the preceding 24 hours, there has been no cyber activity which constitutes an unusual and significant threat to Homeland Security, National Security, the Internet, or the Nation's critical infrastructures.

US-CERT Operations Center Synopsis: US-CERT is aware of malicious software exploiting a vulnerability in the Microsoft Distributed Transaction Coordinator (MSDTC). Successful exploitation could allow a remote, unauthenticated attacker to execute arbitrary code on the system. US-CERT is also aware of increased scanning activity on port 1025/tcp, a port commonly used by this service. For more information about this vulnerability can be found in the following US-CERT Vulnerability Note:

VU#180868 Microsoft Distributed Transaction Coordinator vulnerable to buffer overflow via specially crafted network message please see vulnerability note:

<http://www.kb.cert.org/vuls/id/180868>

Microsoft has released an update to address this vulnerability in Microsoft Security Bulletin MS05-051 please see:

<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/Bulletin/MS05-051.mspx>

US-CERT encourages administrators to apply the appropriate updates as soon as possible.

Exploit for Vulnerability in Microsoft Internet Explorer window() object US-CERT

is aware of a vulnerability in the way Microsoft Internet Explorer handles requests to the window() object. If exploited, the vulnerability could allow a remote attacker to execute arbitrary code with the privileges of the user. Additionally, the attacker could also cause IE (or the program using the WebBrowser control) to crash. According to Microsoft, malicious software is targeting this vulnerability. We have confirmed that the proof of concept code is successful on Windows 2000 and Windows XP systems that are fully patched as of November 30, 2005. For more information about this vulnerability can be found in the following US-CERT Vulnerability Note:

VU#887861 Microsoft Internet Explorer vulnerable to code execution via mismatched DOM objects. <http://www.kb.cert.org/vuls/id/887861>

Microsoft has released an update to address this vulnerability in Microsoft Security Bulletin MS05-054. <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/bulletin/ms05-054.msp>

US-CERT encourages administrators to apply the appropriate updates, patches, or fixes as soon as possible.

Current Port Attacks

Top 10 Target Ports	1026 (win-rpc), 6346 (gnutella-svc), 4142 (oidocsvc), 445 (microsoft-ds), 27015 (halflife), 6881 (bittorrent), 18551 (---), 80 (www), 25 (smtp), 135 (epmap) Source: http://isc.incidents.org/top10.html ; Internet Storm Center
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To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at soc@us-cert.gov or visit their Website: www.us-cert.gov.

Information on IT information sharing and analysis can be found at the IT ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center) Website: <https://www.it-isac.org/>.

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Commercial Facilities/Real Estate, Monument & Icons Sector

40. *December 17, Herald News (NJ)* — Better security needed at New Jersey schools. A knife fight in the cafeteria between two Passaic, NJ, High School students last week, including one who smuggled a machete into the building, has prompted school officials to reassess security measures, such as installing metal detectors and adding more surveillance cameras. At a Board of Education workshop meeting on Wednesday, December 14, school Superintendent Robert Holster requested approval to hire a consultant to review the district's security plans, specifically at the high school and Lincoln Middle School. Holster said there are plans to place four additional off-duty police officers on Monday, December 19, at the high school, boosting the force to 15 security officers. Holster said the four new officers would patrol the cafeteria, where about 500 students can congregate in a relatively small area. Holster also wants to add metal detectors to help prevent students from smuggling weapons inside the school. The superintendent said that while violence and vandalism have declined over the past four years in the district, he remains concerned with staying on top of gang activity at the high school and middle school.

Source: <http://www.bergen.com/page.php?qstr=eXJpcnk3ZjczN2Y3dnFIZUVF>

eXk2MDkmZmdiZWw3Zjd2cWVIRUV5eTY4NDAwNzkmeXJpcnk3ZjcxN2Y3dnFlZUVFeXkz

41. *December 16, Albany Times Union (NY)* — **New York schools step up security.** The Guilderland Central School District has taken steps to improve security at its elementary schools, but it has stopped short of keeping all doors locked while school is open. At a meeting earlier this month the Board of Education voted to instead install surveillance cameras at the district's K–5 schools that don't already have them. The board also agreed to issue swipe security cards to staff that need to open doors that are currently locked with keys. Both moves are being funded using \$60,000 that had been set aside for additional security measures in the 2005–2006 school year budget, said Superintendent Gregory Aidala. Earlier this school year the district, acting on a subcommittee recommendation, hired five part–time security monitors who greet visitors at the front lobby of the district's five elementary schools, and direct them to sign in and show identification. The high school and middle school already use security monitors.

Source: <http://timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=430483&category=ALBANY&BCCode=&newsdate=12/17/2005>

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General Sector

Nothing to report.

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To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US–CERT at soc@us-cert.gov or visit their Web page at www.us-cert.gov.

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